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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**IMMIGRATION LAWYER AND OTHERS CHARGED IN RACKETEERING SCHEME**

Greenbelt, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that Maqsood Mir, age 51, of Potomac, Maryland; Mohammad Bajwa, age 38, of Herndon, Virginia; Abdul Javaid, age 68, of Mclean, Virginia; Jamal Hussain, age 45, of Kingston, New York; and, Zulfiqar Ali, age 43, of Virginia Beach, Virginia were indicted on racketeering and charges of conspiring to harbor aliens and to submit false documents to the Department of Labor and to the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which permitted unknown individuals to enter or remain in the United States as permanent resident aliens.

According to the charges, aliens could apply for an immigrant visa to enter the United States for the purpose of performing skilled or unskilled labor for a United States employer under a program administered by the Department of Labor (DOL) and ICE. The U.S. employer and the alien were required to fill out and submit to the DOL through state agencies a document known as an Application for Alien Employment Certification. Once approved by the DOL, the form entitled the alien to apply for an immigrant visa to enter the United States to perform the work for which he was

hired. If an alien intending to enter the United States through the Labor Certification process changed his mind, the approved Labor Certifications could nevertheless be resold to others who were qualified to perform the job listed and who were otherwise eligible to enter the United States. This process was legally known as a substitution. In all cases, the employer was required to sponsor the alien and to know the alien's qualifications to fill the job.

In a 23 count Superseding Indictment unsealed after the arrest today of Javaid, Hussain and Ali, the United States charged Mir, an immigration lawyer practicing in Potomac, Maryland, and Bajwa, Javaid, Hussain and Ali, businessmen and sponsoring employers, with numerous racketeering acts occurring from January 1, 1998 to approximately 2003, related to the harboring of illegal aliens and subsequent submission of false Labor Certification applications for those harbored aliens, and for other individuals who were not legitimately requested by U.S. employers or who were not known to those employers. The government alleged that Hussain and Ali harbored certain aliens who had come into the United States illegally through Canada, and that they then worked with Mir to file false Labor Certification applications and visa applications, known as I-140s, on behalf of those aliens. The Superseding Indictment charges that the applications were filed on behalf of Hussain's and Ali's gas station/mini-mart businesses in New York and Virginia. The government also alleged that Bajwa and Javaid allowed Mir to use their businesses, the New Superstar Corporation of Arlington, and Potomac Automotive Services of Dumfries, Virginia, respectively, as sponsors of aliens who never were intended or able to work for those businesses.

The government further alleged that Mir used certain of his business clients as unwitting sponsors of unknown aliens. The scheme involved the submission of applications for aliens in numerous states along the east coast.

In announcing the unsealing of the indictment, Thomas M. DiBiagio said, “This indictment should send a message to those who take advantage of the immigration laws – particularly immigration attorneys and businessmen who exploit their small businesses and law practices to sponsor aliens illegally – that they will be prosecuted aggressively and to the full extent of the law.”

If convicted, the defendants face 20 years imprisonment on the racketeering charges, 10 years imprisonment on the document fraud charges and 5 years imprisonment on the conspiracy charge. Each charge also carries a fine of \$250,000. Certain of the assets owned by Mir, Bajwa, Javaid, Hussain and Ali which were involved in the racketeering activity also are subject to forfeiture under the Superseding Indictment.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by either complaint or indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The case is the result of an investigation by the Department of Labor- Office of Inspector General and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David I. Salem and Chan Park.